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RIGA-MADE CEMENT DROPS IN QUALITY

In 1952, builders were enthusiastic about the cement manufactured by the Riga Cement Plant. At that time the plant was manufacturing cements of grade "500" and, frequently, grade "600."

However, in 1953 things changed; the average grade of cement manufactured in January was "480," while in February it dropped to "415." In March, the plant manufactured 82 percent of grade "500" and 18 percent of grade "400." The plant failed to manufacture even one lot of higher grades during the above months, and the situation has not improved in June 1953.

Not having its own lime quarry, the plant is forced to obtain lime from neighboring enterprises, particularly the Brotseny Combine, and quite frequently obtains lime containing a considerable amount of sand and clay from its suppliers. Technical specifications provide that the mixture of lime and clay to be burned must contain 78.5 percent carbonaceous calcium, but the lime supplied to the plant by the Brotseny Combine contains 77-78 percent or less calcium. This combine has been shipping the plant inferior lime some time.

The plant could possibly obtain a purer lime containing 98-99 percent calcium from the Akmyany Deposits for use as an additive in making cement. However, during the winter the lime from these deposits comes in frozen lumps and is difficult to handle. The difficulty could be overcome by thawing out the lime at the quarry and then shipping it, rather than sending it immediately after it is extracted.

Despite the fact that the winter season is over, the plant still is not obtaining lime from Akmyany, because the two enterprises are unable to agree on price. As a result, the plant recently referred the dispute for arbitration.

Instead of using the lime obtained from Akmyany as an additive to the lime containing sand and clay obtained from other suppliers, Riga plant technologists have been using the Akmyany lime as primary raw material in making cement, giving as their reason the fact that the use of this lime eliminated

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the necessity of cleaning the crusher and other equipment, inasmuch as the Akmyany lime did not stick to the metal as did the lime from other supplies. Nevertheless, the plant did not improve the quality of its cement, simply because the slurry which was put into the burning kilns contained too much titer. Because the plant lacked clay, it was unable to reduce the higher carbonaceous calcium content of this lime, although a half year's supply of clay could be found a few hundred meters from the kilning shop, on the banks of the Daugava River.

The plant has four slurry storage and analyzing bins, and can readily have available in these bins a 5-day supply of raw material, but it has been making very inefficient use of these bins. Despite the fact that one of the bins contained 74-76 percent calcium for 2 days continuously, simply because of a breakdown of the compressor resulting in the fact that the slurry in the other bins was not mixed for several days.

The plant's compressing equipment consists of one rather shabby machine. Two powerful compressors, which were assembled in 1952, are still not operating because of the lack of electric motors and air vents.

To improve the quality of its cement, the plant previously added tripoli to the clinker. Even now, piles of tripoli are found at the plant, but no one at the plant knows how it is to be dried. Attempts were made to load the material by hand into the recuperators, but the process was time-consuming and did not achieve the desired results. The plant obtained a drying cylinder in summer 1952, but it has not been put into use.

The plant's testing laboratory has also been carrying on its functions very poorly. Instead of testing the raw material every hour as other enterprises do, the laboratory makes tests every 2 hours. Tests to determine the amount of lime and clinker content are made even more infrequently -- twice a day. Tests to determine the heat intensity of the coal which is used in burning the lime and clinker to make the cement are made in the laboratory of another department, and the plant receives samples of the coal tested 2 weeks after the tests have been made. The laboratory analyzers acknowledge the fact that the majority of the tests are made merely as a formality. The necessary information becomes available after the slurry mixture has already been transformed into clinker and after the coal has been burned.

In the middle of 1953 the plant made some improvements over its operations in the early part of the year.

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